

Week Ending Friday, December 14, 2007

**Remarks Following a Meeting With
Jewish Community Leaders**

December 10, 2007

I've just had an extraordinary meeting with Jewish men and women, many of whom are from different parts of the world, who are fortunate to call America home. And they do so because of our great tradition of religious freedom and religious tolerance.

We discussed how America must remain engaged in helping people realize the great blessings of religious freedom and where we find societies in which religious freedom is not allowed to practice, that we must do something about it.

I recognize today is International Human Rights Day. And a good way to celebrate this day is to invited people from our country and from around the world to share with me their stories, stories of courage and stories of people who simply want to be in a society where people are allowed to worship freely.

We discussed the world in which we live today. We all recognize that we're in an ideological struggle against people who murder the innocent in order to achieve political objectives, and that on the one hand, America must do everything to protect ourselves and are doing so. In the long term, the best way to defeat an ideology of hate is with an ideology of hope. An ideology of hope is one that says, we value your religion; we honor the way you worship. And in our society, you can worship any way you so choose, and that's the vision and dream for societies around the world.

So I want to thank you for sharing your stories with me. I thank you for your courage. May God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

**Remarks on Lighting the Hanukkah
Menorah**

December 10, 2007

Thank you. Good evening. Laura and I welcome you to the White House. Mr. Attorney General, thank you for being here—Secretary Chertoff and family. Hanukkah is a time of joy and festivity in the Jewish religion. We're honored to gather with members of the Jewish community to celebrate this holiday.

During Hanukkah, we remember an ancient struggle for freedom. More than 2,000 years ago, a cruel tyrant ruled Judea and forbade the Israelites from practicing their religion. A band of brothers came together to fight this oppression, and against incredible odds, they liberated the capital city of Jerusalem. As they set about rededicating the Holy Temple, they witnessed a great miracle: that purified oil that was supposed to last for 1 day burned for 8.

Jewish families commemorate this miracle by lighting the menorah for the 8 nights of Hanukkah. The Talmud instructs families to place the menorah in public view so the entire world can see its light. The flames remind us that light triumphs over darkness, faith conquers despair, and the desire for freedom burns inside every man, woman, and child.

As we light the Hanukkah candles this year, we pray for those who still live under the shadow of tyranny. This afternoon I met with a group of Jewish immigrants to mark International Human Rights Day. Many of these men and women fled from religious oppression in countries like Iran and Syria and the Soviet Union. They came to America because our Nation is a beacon of freedom. And they see a day of hope on the horizon when people all across the world will worship in freedom. The forces of intolerance can suppress the menorah, but they can never extinguish its light.

The menorah we light tonight has special meaning. It once belonged to Chayim Pearl, who was the great-grandfather of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. While reporting in Pakistan in 2002, Daniel was kidnaped and murdered by terrorists. His only crime was being a Jewish American, something Daniel Pearl would never deny. In his final moments, Daniel told his captors about a street in Israel named for his great-grandfather. He looked into their camera, and he said, "My father is Jewish; my mother is Jewish; and I'm Jewish." These words have become a source of inspiration for Americans of all faiths. They show the courage of a man who refused to bow before terror and the strength of a spirit that could not be broken.

Daniel's memory remains close to our hearts. Those who knew him best remember a gifted writer who loved the violin and made friends wherever he went. We're honored that Daniel's parents, Ruth and Judea, have joined us today. We thank them for their work on behalf of the Daniel Pearl Foundation. The foundation helps bring people from different cultures together through journalism and music. It's a fitting tribute to Daniel's lifelong pursuit of truth and tolerance. By honoring Daniel, we are given the opportunity to bring forth hope from the darkness of tragedy, and that is a miracle worth celebrating during the Festival of Lights.

Laura and I wish people of Jewish faith around the world a happy Hanukkah. May God bless you all.

Tonight we will hear a wonderful performance by the Zamir Chorale. But first, I ask Ruth and Judea to light the Pearl family menorah and lead the blessings.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:27 p.m. in the Grand Foyer at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey.

Remarks Following a Discussion on Teen Drug Use Statistics December 11, 2007

Thank you. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. Director Walters and Dr. Volkow, thank you for joining me. We've got

the Ambassador *de Mexico y tambien Colombia*—thanks for coming. I appreciate you all being here. Where are the—*Embajador, bienvenidos—los dos*. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate the students from Brown Academy for joining us. I want to thank officials in my administration for being here. I welcome our honored guests.

I am pleased to be here with the men and women who have enlisted, have signed up, in our country's fight against illegal drugs. You battle an unrelenting evil that ruins families, endangers neighborhoods, and stalks our children. You're part of a mission that will shape our Nation's future. You're fulfilling the highest calling of citizenship; you're giving your fellow Americans the chance for a better life. And I thank you for your good and noble work.

I've just come from a roundtable—or was it a square table—but either way, it was a table—[laughter]—where I met with community activists and youth leaders, people who've heard a call to answer our Nation's need to be engaged in a fierce battle against drug abuse—those who encourage it and those who profit from it. The drug trade has enriched our society's enemies. It has funded acts of terror. It feeds an addiction that causes some Americans to turn to crime.

When I took office, our country was facing a troubling rate of drug use among young people. A new generation was in danger of being swept up in a cycle of addiction, crime, and hopelessness. This was a looming crisis, and I felt it required an aggressive response.

And so in 2002, I committed our Nation to an ambitious goal to cut drug use amongst young people by 25 percent over a 5-year period. John Walters agreed with that goal. He's been in charge of leading an effort to achieve that goal. We took a tough and balanced approach. We would cut the supply of drugs coming to our country through aggressive action by law enforcement personnel and international partners. We would fight the demand for drugs here at home through prevention and treatment. In other words, our strategy was balance. On the one hand, we'll interdict and prevent and disrupt the drug supply networks, and on the other hand, we'll work to convince people they shouldn't use drugs in the first place. And those that